



## IS IT ROSH HASHANAH YET?

Written by Chris Barash

Illustrated by Alessandra Psacharopulo

*Summer has ended, apples are on the trees, leaves are turning color, and families are getting ready for a big holiday. How can kids tell when the new year has arrived? This book will show you.*

### JEWISH CONCEPTS

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is an autumn holiday, arriving at the start of the Jewish month of *Tishrei*, which coincides with September or early October. Rosh Hashanah is a holiday with multiple traditions from around the world. Many Jews go to synagogue, where they sing, pray, and listen to the trumpeting blast of the *shofar* (a ram's horn) meant to jolt listeners awake, remind them to take stock of the past year, and encourage them to reflect on things they can do better in the coming one.

At home, many families host a festive meal that includes challah, braided egg bread. Challah is traditionally baked in a round shape at Rosh Hashanah to represent renewal and the cycle of life. Many families also dip apple slices in honey as a way of ushering in a sweet new year.

Pomegranates are a customary Rosh Hashanah treat, too. Jewish tradition holds that each pomegranate contains 613 seeds, which symbolize the 613 *mitzvot* (commandments) in the Bible.

Rosh Hashanah ushers in the Ten Days of Repentance, which culminate in Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The two holidays go hand in hand; at the beginning of a new year, we think about the ways we can improve on our actions of the previous year, ushering in a fresh start. *L'Shanah Tovah* – Happy New Year!

### USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

The children in this book take part in many classic Rosh Hashanah activities, including making cards for family and friends. You and your children can make extra-special cards by putting your own stamp on them – an apple stamp, that is.

#### Supplies

- Paper plates
- Nontoxic paint
- Apples
- Craft paper

Place a small amount of different paints on the paper plates.

Cut the apples in half. (This is an adult's job.) Invite your child to examine them once they're cut open; each one will look a little different inside depending on how it's sliced. If you slice an apple across its equator, your child might see a star.

Dip the cut side of the apple in the paint (blot on a paper towel if it's too goopy), then press it on the craft paper. Repeat as desired.

Write your good wishes for the coming year!